

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BUENOS 05379 172016Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 ARAE-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 H-02 DHA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6755

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, CASC, AR

SUBJ: FATHER JAMES WEEKS TO LEAVE ARGENTINA

REF: A) SMITH-ZIMMERMAN TELECON OF AUG 13

B) SMITH-RONDON AND SMITH-GAMBLE TELECONS OF AUG 16

1. EMBASSY WAS UNOFFICIALLY ADVISED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY EVENING OF AUG 13 THAT LATTER INFORMED BY THIRD CORPS HDQTRS IN CORDOBA THAT AS OF AUG 16 FATHER WEEKS WOULD NO LONGER BE HELD INCOMUNICADO. THUS, MINISTRY INDICATED, EMBASSY COULD PROBABLY HAVE CONSULAR ACCESS TO HIM SOMETIME AFTERNOON OF AUG 16. IN THE EVENT, HOWEVER, THEY WERE UNABLE TO CONFIRM AS QUICKLY AS EXPECTED. APPARENTLY THEY HAD TO WAIT ON THIRD CORPS COMMANDER GENERAL MENENDEZ TO GIVE GO AHEAD. EMBASSY TOO TRIED TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH MENENDEZ AND FINALLY SUCCEEDED LATE IN AFTERNOON. AT 1800 MENENDEZ INFORMED EMBASSY THAT CONSULAR OFFICER COULD VISIT FATHER WEEKS NEXT DAY. MENENDEZ ALSO INDICATED FATHER WEEKS WOULD BE EXPELLED FROM COUNTRY WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS.

2. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, FOREIGN MINISTRY, WHICH APPARENTLY HAD GOTTEN THROUGH TO MENENDEZ'S OFFICE ABOUT SAME TIME AS WE HAD, CALLED TO ADVISE US THAT WEEKS WAS TO BE EXPELLED, POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS AUG 18. DETAILS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF EXPULSION, HOWEVER, REMAINED UNCLEAR. MINISTRY ALSO CONFIRMED CONSULAR ACCESS.

3. MORNING OF AUG 17, CONSULAR OFFICER WHITMAN AND BODYGUARDS  
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PAGE 02 BUENOS 05379 172016Z

FLOWN TO CORDOBA ABOARD ATTACHE AIRCRAFT BY AIR AND NAVAL ATTACHES. WHITMAN WAS ABLE TO VISIT FATHER WEEKS JUST AFTER NOON AND FOUND LATTER IN GOOD HEALTH. WEEKS WAS STILL IN CUSTODY OF POLICE, THOUGH HIS CASE IN HANDS OF ARMY.

4. SUBSEQUENT TO CONSULAR VISIT, WHITMAN ADVISED BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES THAT THEY WISHED TO RELEASE WEEKS IMMEDIATELY PROVIDED HE COULD TRAVEL TO BUENOS AIRES WITH WHITMAN. WEEKS WAS TO LEAVE COUNTRY WITHIN SOME 48 HOURS, BUT AS HE WAS NOT TO BE IN CUSTODY MEANWHILE AND AS EMBASSY WAS NOT MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEPARTURE, THIS WAS TO AMOUNT TO A FORM OF VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE. WEEKS HIMSELF HAD ALREADY EXPRESSED TO WHITMAN HIS WILLINGNESS TO DEPART ARGENTINA ASAP. ONLY DOCUMENT WHITMAN WAS ASKED TO SIGN WAS ONE INDICATING WEEKS HAD BEEN TURNED OVER IN STATE OF NORMAL PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH. WHITMAN CONSULTED WITH EMBASSY BY PHONE. EMBASSY ADVISED HIM TO SIGN DOCUMENT AND RETURN TO BUENOS AIRES WITH WEEKS IMMEDIATELY. AS OF 1700 AUG 17, EMBASSY ASSUMES THEY ARE ENROUTE FROM CORDOBA.

5. ARRANGEMENTS NOW BEING MADE TO GET WEEKS ON FLIGHT BACK TO US WITHIN NEXT 36 HOURS. UNTIL DEPARTURE, HE PROBABLY WILL REMAIN AT LITTLE COMPANY OF MARY HOSPITAL. CABLE WITH DETAILS OF DEPARTURE WILL FOLLOW TOMORROW.

6. PRIVACY ACT RESTRICTIONS: WEEKS ORALLY AUTHORIZED EMBASSY AND DEPT TO DISCUSS HIS CASE WITH NEXT OF KIN, LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE AND SENATORS OR CONGRESSMEN. TO PRESS, HOWEVER, HE AUTHORIZED RELEASE LIMITED TO STATEMENT THAT HE IS IN GOOD HEALTH.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY HAS DEFINITE IMPRESSION THAT AT THIS POINT GOA'S MAIN PREOCCUPATION IS TO AVOID ANY ALLEGATIONS OF TORTURE IN WEEKS CASE. SO FAR, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT HE WAS TORTURED OR PHYSICALLY ABUSED. WE WILL RESERVE FINAL JUDGEMENT, HOWEVER, UNTIL WE HAVE HAD CHANCE TO TALK TO HIM IN PRIVATE.  
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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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